

## XXXIV.—Obituary.

Dr. W. BLASIUS and Mr. ALLAN O. HUME.

## DR. WILHELM BLASIUS.

WILHELM BLASIUS was born at Brunswick on July the 5th, 1815—the second son of Heinrich Blasius, Director of the Ducal Museum of Natural History, who was well-known to all Naturalists by his book on the Mammals of Europe. Like his brother Rudolph, whose name is also familiar to us, Wilhelm studied medicine at Göttingen, Würzburg, and Zürich, and became a Doctor of Medicine in 1868. In 1869 and 1870 he was lecturer at the University of Würzburg. He joined the German army, as military physician, during the Franco-German War in 1870–71, and was awarded the Order of the Iron Cross for his excellent services. On the sudden death of his father in April 1871, Wilhelm Blasius was selected by the Ducal government as his successor in several positions. In addition to his chief duty as Professor of Botany and Keeper of the Botanical Gardens, Wilhelm lectured on Zoology, and became Director of the Ducal Museum of Natural History, which had been joined with the Ducal technological high school (Carolina Wilhelmina), although the latter required only Botany for the education of pharmacists. On account of so many official duties, Wilhelm Blasius had little spare time for literary work, still he published many good scientific papers, most of them dealing with Ornithology, and chiefly on the Birds of the Malay Archipelago (Celebes, Borneo, Palawan, etc.), mainly collected by Dr. Platen (for A. Nehrkorn of Braunschweig). Amongst these were examples of a number of new species, the names of which, however, having been partially published in a local newspaper, lost their priority. The chief paper of Blasius was his Monograph of *Alca impennis* in the 'Neue Naumann'. Beside Ornithology Blasius worked a good deal in Archaeology and Palaeontology, in the latter as Director of the excavations in the celebrated stalactite

cave of Rübeland (Harz Mountains). He also published many articles of a more local character. In fact he had astonishing working powers, unfortunately rather too much distributed. Distinguished by the title of "Geheimer Hofrat," Wilhelm Blasius was also honoured with the membership of many scientific societies. In 1892 the University of Padua elected him a *Doctor philosophiæ*. For many years he belonged to the committee of the "Deutsche Ornithologen Gesellschaft"; in 1904 he was made a Foreign Member of the B.O.U.; he was also Corresponding Member of the Zoological Society of London. All who knew him, and he had many good friends, will deplore his death, as he was much beloved by his relatives and had a large circle of acquaintances.

Braunschweig, July 1912.

O. F.

#### MR. ALLAN OCTAVIAN HUME, C.B.

BETTER known to the world in general, perhaps, as a somewhat eccentric politician than as a Naturalist, Allan Hume deserves ample recognition as the donor of one of the most important gifts ever made to our National Museum of Natural History.

He was born in June 1829, one of the six children of Joseph Hume, the well-known radical M.P. of former days, commonly called "Joey Hume." At the age of twenty young Hume passed out of the East India College at Haileybury into the Indian Civil Service, and was sent off to the North-West Provinces. His merits were quickly detected, and when the great mutiny broke out we find him acting as Collector of Etawah, between Agra and Cawnpore. After a hard struggle with the mutineers, it was found necessary to abandon the head-quarters and much fighting ensued, but the district was ultimately pacified, and Hume returned to Etawah, and retained his post there for the next ten years. His conduct throughout this period was highly approved of, and was rewarded by the C.B. in 1862. After this Hume filled various high posts in the Home, Revenue, and Agricultural Departments of the Indian Service at Simla,

which we need not specify. But what has been called the "impress of his vigorous personality" brought him into conflict with a member of the Government, in which affair he is said to have been in the wrong. He returned to the North-West Provinces, in 1870, as a Member of the Board of Revenue, and in 1882 retired from the Indian Service.

During his long career in the East, Hume, with the assistance of many willing correspondents and friends, had made an enormous collection of birds from every part of the Indian Dominions, and stored them in his home at Simla, in an apartment specially designed for the purpose. He had intended to publish a complete work on the Indian Avifauna, when an unfortunate accident at Simla in 1885 destroyed his MS., then nearly complete. Naturally disgusted with the prospect of having to rewrite such a work, and full of engagements of another sort, Hume now determined to offer his whole collection of Birds to the Natural History Museum at South Kensington. It might have been supposed that such an offer would be rapturously accepted, and that immediate arrangements would have been made for the transfer of the collection to London. But the authorities of the Museum did not see the matter in that light, and we believe that it took nearly two years of negotiations before Dr. Bowdler Sharpe, then head of the Bird-department, was deputed to go out to India to fetch home the present, and the *magnificent* sum of £300 was put down in the estimates for that purpose. In 'The Ibis' for 1885 (p. 456) will be found a lively account by Bowdler Sharpe himself of his journey to Simla and his successful return to England with 62,000 bird-skins and 19,000 eggs, besides books and other articles.

Commencing in 1867, a large series of Notes and Papers from Hume, all relating to Indian Birds, will be found in the pages of this journal, the last being dated in 1881. But subsequently Hume appears to have lost all his interest in Ornithology, though he was an occasional visitor to the Bird-room at South Kensington. He turned to Botany, and made a very large collection of British Plants, which

he left to the South London Botanical Institute, founded and endowed by himself.

Hume died at his own house, The Chalet, Kingswood Road, Upper Norwood, at the age of 82.

The following are the titles of his principal separate works on Birds :—

1869–1870. My Scrap-Book, or Rough Notes on Indian Oology and Ornithology.

1873–1875. Nests and Eggs of Indian Birds.

1874. The Indian Ornithological Collector's Vade Mecum.

1878. A revised List of the Birds of Tenasserim. With W. DAVISON.

1879. A rough tentative List of the Birds of India.

1879–1880. The Game Birds of India, Burmah, and Ceylon. With C. H. T. MARSHALL.

Besides these and his numerous papers in 'The Ibis,' Hume was Editor of (and principal writer in) an Ornithological Journal called 'Stray Feathers.' Of this eleven volumes were published at Calcutta, 1873–1899, to which a twelfth volume and General Index were added by Mr. C. Chubb in 1899.

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XXXV.—*Notices of recent Ornithological Publications.*

[Continued from p. 552.]

89. '*The Auk.*'

[The Auk. A Quarterly Journal of Ornithology. Vol. xxix. Nos. 1, 2, 3 (January to July, 1912).]

In these numbers we may first mention two papers of considerable importance as regards Nomenclature. Mr. W. Stone discusses "Vroeg's Catalogue" and decides that it hardly falls within the binomial system, though he considers that the 'Adumbratiuncukæ' attributed to Pallas, and now known to be attached to three copies of the "Catalogue," stand on a different footing. Mr. Rhoads adds to Dr. Richmond's list of papers by Rafinesque ('Auk,' 1909) two from the 'Kentucky Gazette,' representing his best work. If such publication is to be accepted, the genus *Hydrochelidon* would